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**PHILIPPINE INSURGENCIES AND THE U.S. RESPONSE**

by



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## INTRODUCTION

The Philippines is a nation at risk of indefinite turmoil and possible dissolution. Two extra-governmental insurgencies, one communist inspired and the other Moslem separatist, test the mettle of the Aquino government. Economically the country is recovering from a severe recession in the late 1980s while the rest of the industrial world stands poised on the brink of its own recession, putting the Philippine economy once again at risk. At the same time, Aquino's military is of questionable loyalty: numerous coup attempts and mutinies give the impression of a government in disarray, barely able to control itself, much less a fragmenting country. Political turmoil and unstable governments are legend throughout the third world and of varying importance to the United States and its interests. Yet the case of the Philippines is unique by virtue of its location in the center of the burgeoning Pacific rim, and the U.S. security commitments to the region.

What should the United States policy be in the Philippines? As one of our few colonies, granted independence in 1946, we have a 'special relationship' with the nation. For years we supported Ferdinand Marcos' kleptocracy, in part because of that 'special relationship', but more importantly because of Marcos' staunch anti-communism during the height of the cold and Vietnam wars. With communism in retreat in Eurasia, and China reexamining itself and its relationship with the nations of the

world, how much and what kind of effort should the United States government supply to the Philippines? The purpose of this paper is threefold: to examine the relative importance of an American military presence in the Philippines; to explore the nature of the extra-governmental communist insurgency in that nation;\* and to present a policy alternative with an attendant strategy for the United States.

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\* The internal governmental problems in the Philippines present their own unique dangers to the country's stability, and deserve a full examination in their own right. The Moslem separatist movement is also important, but it seeks secession from, and control of, the Philippines. In both cases in-depth examinations are beyond the scope of this paper, and they will be discussed only as they relate to objectives of the paper.

## WHY AMERICAN BASES IN THE PHILIPPINES

America negotiated its first basing agreement with the newly independent Philippines in 1947. As a strategic bastion against expansion of communism and thus a necessary element of our policy of containment, we've had a major military presence there ever since. The 1947 agreement gave the U.S. rights for one hundred years, but intervening changes modified the agreement, and the present Philippine constitution calls for a new treaty (as opposed to agreement) in 1992. With the Aquino government publicly opposed to continued American presence, a new agreement will be costly to the U.S. and the security returns must be well worth the cost.<sup>1</sup>

From a national security standpoint, America cannot yet afford to view the modest liberalization in the Soviet Union and withdrawal of its overseas troops as a permanent change in the geo-political landscape.<sup>2</sup> Recent Russian intervention in the Baltic states, and reports that Gorbachev is now forced to 'share' power with the Soviet military caution against making hasty permanent changes to our own military deployments.<sup>3</sup>

Nevertheless, actions by the Soviet government over the past several years caused America to significantly downgrade the Soviet threat and the American military is contracting. As our overseas forward presence is reduced by closing foreign bases in the coming years, each remaining base acquires heightened importance.

As a matter of policy, the United States has committed itself to supporting the collective security of the southwest Pacific, whose nations are loosely affiliated in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). The American security umbrella allows ASEAN members to devote their energies and resources to economic growth, and trade with these growing nations is critical to America's economic and political wellbeing. Hence it is in our own self interest to insure the ASEAN nations are stable and continue to grow. Implicit in a realistic security umbrella is the continuation of an American military presence in the area.<sup>4</sup> Unofficially, some ASEAN states have told the U.S. that they very much want our continued presence in the Philippines.<sup>5</sup>

In addition to our own geo-political interest in the area, ASEAN is concerned with the belligerency of Vietnam, which is also a client state of the USSR. Until recently the Russians maintained a notable naval and air presence at Cam Ranh Bay; although most Russian forces are now withdrawn from that base rapid changes in the world geo-political situation could see an equally rapid redeployment.

The Chinese, while claiming not to supply arms to insurgencies in several ASEAN nations, reserve the right to provide 'moral' support. Beijing asserts any contact it might have with the insurgencies is "unofficial," hence the contacts are not interference in internal affairs. Moreover, China has numerous territorial disputes with ASEAN members, which can help

provide diplomatic leverage and an invitation to meddle in the politics of the region.<sup>6</sup>

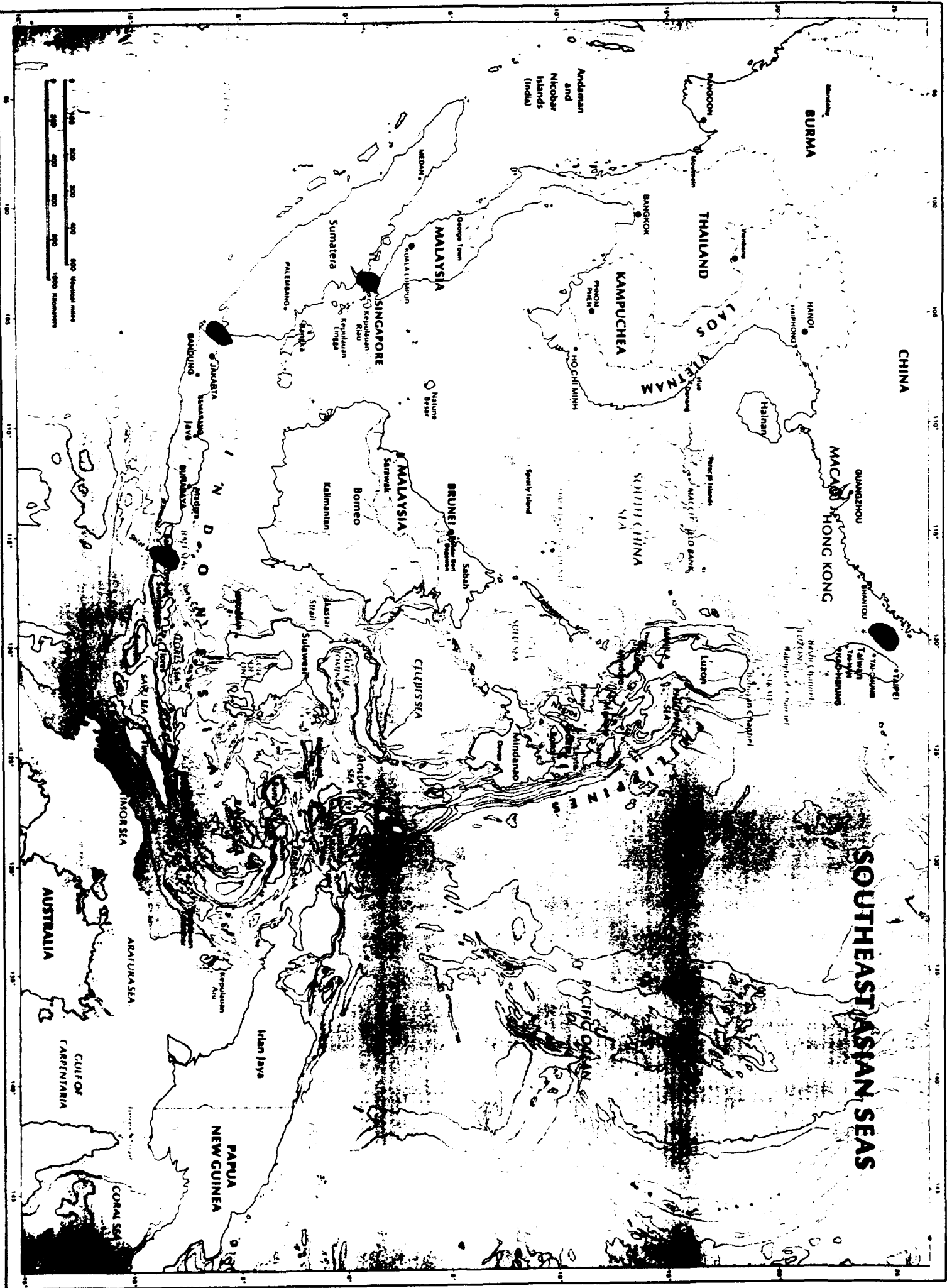
The inherent value to U.S. and ASEAN of a policy of bases in the Philippines lies in their strategic location. Such a location offers the following advantages:<sup>7</sup>

- Control sea lanes of communication in the South China Sea.
- Reduce the significance of any renewed Soviet ground, air or naval presence in the region.
- Deter support by communist countries for the Philippine New Peoples Army (NPA).
- Forestall the development of regional naval rivalries.
- Provide a forward location from which to rapidly reinforce the Korean peninsula.

Figure 1 illustrates the factors which make those bases an almost ideal location for sea control and power protection in the area of Vietnam, as well as throughout the Pacific rim. From the Philippines naval and air forces are capable of projecting power to "Malacca, Sunda, Lombok, Ombai, and Taiwan Straits, as well as the Bashi Channel," chokepoints in the region through almost all commercial and naval vessels must pass. By controlling those points the U.S. can enforce freedom of navigation and effectively control Soviet naval operations in the area in the event of a conflict.<sup>8</sup>

The naval base at Subic Bay with nearby Clark Air Base, and a handful of other smaller facilities are the "foundation of the





United States military presence in the region."<sup>9</sup> Simply having a forward operating and logistics base can potentially reduce the total number required to keep one ship on station from three to almost one.<sup>10</sup> Subic is large enough to support two or more aircraft carrier battle groups, along with an 833-foot drydock large enough to hold all U.S. Navy ships except our newest aircraft carriers and two battleships.<sup>11</sup>

Over the decades the operational and support facilities in the Philippines became so sophisticated that conservative estimates put their replacement cost at almost \$8 billion. That cost assumes, of course, that a friendly government would invite such a large U.S. presence on their territory. Far more important than the cost would be the loss of a highly skilled ship-repair work force. The training and experience of these Filipino employees can only be recreated with money and, most importantly, time.<sup>12</sup>

This is not to say, however, that the loss of the Philippines bases would force an American withdrawal back to Hawaii. Several opportunities would exist for continued American presence in the Pacific Rim region. Singapore, to cite one example, has offered the U.S. limited naval and air rights. While this and other offers pale in comparison to the facilities in the Philippines, they are nonetheless significant in that they demonstrate a political desire on the part of the Pacific nations for our continued presence. Guam, Tinian, and Saipan are also potential locations and have the advantage of being

U.S. territory, but suffer from the disadvantage of being too far removed from our area of concern.<sup>13</sup>

In sum then, we can quite reasonably conclude that an American presence in the region is important to our national interests; that on the whole the facilities in the Philippines best support that presence; and that U.S. policy should be to attempt to secure a new agreement by 1992.

## THE COMMUNIST INSURGENCY

The Philippines has faced the most serious armed opposition of any ASEAN country in the last fifteen years.<sup>14</sup> As with most other insurgencies the one in the Philippines stems from a variety of social and economic antecedents. Government economic policy under Marcos sought development through a general policy promoting export growth, as opposed to the import substitution scheme of the 1950s.<sup>15</sup> As might be expected in an agrarian economy exports consisted of bulk agricultural commodities, together with inexpensive apparel, which were subject to the vagaries of the world market. Figures 2 and 3 (Appendix) show the expected results: increasing trade and budget deficits which crowded-out investment in industry and infrastructure. The lack of a solid growth oriented industrial policy has resulted in an increasing economic polarization in the Philippines (Figure 4, Appendix).

The communist insurgency, if not caused by the Marcos regime, was certainly aided by it. Marcos was in many ways the epitome of the corrupt, and corrupting, autocrat. During his 'reign' he "corrupted the intent, the form, and, to the extent he was able to make his regime synonymous with Filipino democracy, even the very meaning of the word."<sup>16</sup> Marcos decreed martial law in 1972 for the announced purpose of aiding the government's counterinsurgency efforts. Yet the decree caused the alienation of the population which was not a member of the ruling elite,

and thwarted the military in its counterinsurgency operations because:

(Marcos) co-opted his generals by giving them smuggling and other illicit privileges, which alienated younger officers who felt that favoritism and corruption were hobbling their fight against the communists.<sup>17</sup>

Moreover, Marcos' ill-considered plan for rapid economic growth provided ample ammunition for the CPP in their quest for legitimacy at the exclusion of the elected government. Dams and other public works projects in rural areas were viewed by the peasants as a desecration of sacred tribal lands; slum clearance projects destroyed but did not replace the homes of thousands of poor city dwellers; and a propensity for spectacular building projects, particularly luxury hotels in Manila, underlined the difference between the 'haves' and the 'have nots.'<sup>18</sup>

This trend of apparent indifference toward the majority of the population seems to continue under Aquino. For example, the 1990 earthquake in central Luzon underscored her increasingly inert governance when the bureaucracy moved at a sloth's pace to mobilize rescue and recovery efforts. American troops and supplies from Clark and Subic were the first on the scene, "underlining her dependence on the United States."<sup>19</sup> In another instance the (formerly) West German Agency for Technical Cooperation offered to fund road construction in southern Luzon. Despite community planning meetings and an apparent unanimity on

its need, the project remains unfinished. The road is a single example of the government's paralysis:

. . . countrywide much [foreign] aid is unspent, either because of bureaucracy or endless talking about what to spend it on.<sup>20</sup>

Learning from the failure of the Soviet inspired party of the 1950s and 1960s known as the PKP, the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) was conceived on December 26, 1968 (the anniversary of Mao's birth), declaring itself an "organization of the disciples of Marxism, Leninism and the thoughts of Mao Tse-tung."<sup>21</sup> The avowed goal of the organizers was transforming the Philippines into a socialist state through armed insurrection and revolution.<sup>22</sup> The CPP emphasized the importance of a protracted campaign to insure the peasant support, along the lines of Moa's revolution in China.<sup>23</sup> The military arm of the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) is the Philippine New Peoples Army (NPA) formed in 1969 and currently has an estimated membership in excess of 20,000.<sup>24</sup> Coupled with the guerilla operations of the CPP/NPA, there is the much larger National Democratic Front (NDF), founded by the CPP in 1973, and which is estimated to have a membership in excess of 200,000. In addition to CPP/NPA members, the NDF includes a variety of opposition groups, overtly or covertly organized and supported by the CPP. Members include the May First Movement (KMU), Nationalist Youth (KM), Christians for National Liberation (CNL), League of Filipino Students (LFS), Youth for Nationalism

and Democracy, Nationalist Health Association (MASAPA), and the Association of Nationalist Teachers (KAGUMA). Much of the Party's organizing effort in rural villages, or barrios, is the work of the NDF. Where NPA control is well established the NDF then usually functions as the local revolutionary government.<sup>25</sup>

Joining the communists in their insurgency is a significant number Roman Catholic 'liberation theologians.' The Church was long known as conservative and anti-communist, but the spirit of ecumenism following the Second Vatican council prompted many of the religious to begin a dialogue with the communists. Numerous Catholic sponsored groups, such as the Christian Social Movement, became increasingly radical during the 1970s and 1980s. Indicative of the increasing bent toward liberation theology was a statement from the CNL in 1981 calling for Christians to:

. . . discover the revolutionary dimensions of the Gospel and to discern guidance of the Spirit in salvation history as it is being shaped by the masses.<sup>26</sup>

## ANALYSIS OF THE COMMUNIST INSURGENCY

United States Army Field Manual 100-20/Air Force Pamphlet 3-20 offers a thoughtful guide to analyzing insurgencies. The framework it suggests offers seven elements considered common to all insurgencies:<sup>27</sup>

- Leadership
- Ideology
- Objectives
- Environment and Geography
- External Support
- Phasing and Timing
- Organizational and Operational Patterns

This framework forms the core of the analysis of the communist insurgency, and provides the foundation for strategy recommendations.

LEADERSHIP: Organizationally strong, the party is careful to avoid falling into the trap of being a cult of a single charismatic leader. The top leaders are generally disaffected members of the upper class who developed their revolutionary zeal while still in college. Jose Maria Sison, presently the Chairman of the CPP Central Committee, describes his transformation with typical revolutionary cant:

I grew rapidly on the scientific kernel of bourgeois empiricism . . . cast off the bourgeois metaphysics; ripped away the veil of modern imperialism . . . and finally arrived at the most



comprehensive, consistent and thoroughgoing  
philosophy: Marxism-Leninism.<sup>28</sup>

The NDF refuses to acknowledge who its current leader is, or even how it receives direction from the CPP. Senior leadership shies away from publicity, preferring to see the insurrection as the work of a monolithic party, and not that of an individual. When asked in an interview who was in charge of the NDF, the CPP spokesman replied "We'd rather keep the enemy guessing."<sup>29</sup>

IDEOLOGY: Herein lies the core of the strength of the CPP/NDF. The rampant corruption of the Marcos regime, the feudal holdings of the landed gentry, and the whimsical administration by the Aquino government have created a climate of despair that is ideal for exploitation by classic communist ideology.

In addition to the government, the CPP also blames the United States for most of the real or imagined problems in the country:

Since 1946 the United States has Retained control over the subservient semicolonial state through unequal treaties, agreements and arrangements. All these preserve U.S. strategic dominance over the Philippines-politically, militarily, economically, culturally, and socially.<sup>30</sup>

Moreover, the United States is singularly responsible for the lack of industrialization and the failure to implement land reform:

Domestic feudalism persists as the socio-economic base of foreign monopoly capitalism because there is no genuine land reform and no industrialization. There have been token

expropriations of landed estates, but the few parcels of land redistributed to peasants eventually fall into the hands of landlords . . . The chronic crisis of the semicolonial and semifeudal society is rooted in the rapid appropriation of the means of production and the surplus product by the U.S. and local exploiting classes...<sup>31</sup>

The CPP developed these grievances into a ten-point plan of action:<sup>32</sup>

1. Overthrow the forces of U.S. imperialist and feudal aggression.
2. Establish a people's democratic state.
3. Fight for national unity and democratic rights.
4. Follow the principle of democratic centralism.
5. Build and cherish the people's army.
6. Solve the land problem.
7. Carry out industrialization.
8. Promote a national, scientific, and mass culture.
9. Respect the national minorities right to self determination.
10. Adopt an active, independent foreign policy.

This ten-point plan, an accurate reflection of the ideology of the party, is sufficiently vague about the future so that it can be specifically tailored to nearly any target 'market', yet it fulfills the expectation of addressing fairly specific issues. For example, points six and seven talk about land

reform and industrialization, yet the who, what, when, where, and how are poignantly missing.

The major public support for the communists is found in rural areas. The lethargic economy offers little hope to subsistence or tenant farmers, engendering a class-wide sense of hopelessness. The centralized administration, begun and institutionalized by Marcos and generally accepted in practice (but not publicly) by Aquino, is rife with corruption and generally lead to the paralysis and collapse of most local government services. NPA control in many barrios is so complete that the party collects taxes with impunity, and provides basic social services normally expected from a functioning government.<sup>33</sup>

A month after the very public assassination of Benigno Aquino, which Marcos blamed on Rolando Galman of the NPA despite voluminous evidence to the contrary, the NDF issued a manifesto claiming:

The Filipino people will no longer tolerate the loss of their liberties, the exploitation of their labor, the plundering of their natural resources, the shameless looting of public funds, the arbitrary arrests, brutal torture, and ruthless murders . . .<sup>34</sup>

The manifesto eloquently expressed the mounting frustration of many Filipino people with the continuing one man rule. Allusions in the manifesto to police state tactics and state-sponsored terrorism, feudal working conditions imposed by a

landed gentry, and corrupt plundering of public accounts by Marcos and his denizens clearly showed the decaying legitimacy of the Marcos government.

The NDF seeks to capitalize on this eroding legitimacy, and intends to garner the support of Filipinos without regard, for the most part, to class lines. The NDF does demand, however, that its members accept the 'national democratic' position, which calls for:

. . . middle forces [middle class] who support the armed struggle, who recognize in various degrees the leading role of the party, and who do not oppose the party on any fundamental principle.<sup>35</sup>

Regardless of its attempts to find support in all classes, the CPP is undoubtedly playing the politics of envy; the political and economic situation in the Philippines makes it easy to do. Words like 'feudal' trigger emotional responses in the intended audience, both the peasants and the detached public. The ideology is aimed at the poor rural and urban poor: title to farm land with the implication that each peasant might get to select his plot, another matter entirely. The call for land reform lends almost instant credibility where 90 percent of the land is owned by 10 percent of the people, and where the landlords keep 80 percent of the production.<sup>36</sup> Also implied, but never stated, is the promise of well paying jobs in bustling urban factories, another tempting panaceas.

OBJECTIVES: The CPP/NPA strategic objective, based on their chairman's published ideology, is a centrally controlled communist state. The United States would, of course, be forced to leave the country, and the revolutionary double-speak of 'an active, independent foreign policy' can reasonably be translated to 'allied with China and other agitating communist governments.'

Operationally, the objectives are equally clear, and were announced by the NPA on March 29, 1969:

The main strategic [sic] principle of the New People's Army is a protracted people's war, with its armed units growing ever stronger in the countryside . . . agrarian revolution and the building of rural bases, and consistently encircling the cities until such time that the enemy forces are finally exhausted after being defeated piece by piece in the country side. The NPA is determined to build rural bases, establish local organs of the people's government and advance...It shall systematically create and elevate the guerilla zones to the level of stable areas where [the] local people's government can operate fully.<sup>37</sup>

Easy acceptance by the peasants of promises to redistribute land quickly brings more tradition forms of communist control. Routine techniques include assassinations of unpleasant landlords or government officials; fines and retribution for peasant infractions to NPA rules or authority; and eventually total control of barrios and entire regions. The CPP/NPA claims to control approximately 8200 barrios out of over 41,000 in the

country, and the government acknowledges active NPA operations in 63 out of the 74 provinces in the country.<sup>38</sup>

ENVIRONMENT AND GEOGRAPHY: The CPP/NPA, given its Maoist bent, sees itself as a peasant revolution. As such, it spends considerable effort in the barrios and jungles. The Philippine archipelago is an ideal situation for such a movement: much of the country is jungle with few all-weather roads and poor telephones. Government lines of communication are stretched thin, in often futile attempts to meet the insurgents on their own turf. The present government can hardly provide security for over 41,000 barrios, and must resign control of some to the insurgents.

EXTERNAL SUPPORT: Remarkably, the CPP/NPA gets little material support from outside the country, which Bernstein and Heredia say "constitutes the most conspicuous weakness of the CPP/NPA."<sup>39</sup> The CPP grew out of a rift with the Moscow-oriented Philippine Communist Party, and has made little effort to conceal its dislike for Soviet-style communism. So sharp was the break with Moscow that when Sison started the party he claims they had only thirty-five weapons.<sup>40</sup> There is some evidence that the Chinese may have supported the CPP/NPA in the early 1970s, but now there is little indication of any active material support from them or any other government which seeks to export its revolution, i.e., Cuba.<sup>41</sup>

Some press reports allude to financial support from sympathetic private groups in the United States and Europe,

particularly some which are Church affiliated. One CPP periodical which receives wide circulation in religious circles asked for "tax deductible" donations in the United States. Although some constituent organizations of the NDF claim broad-based foreign non-governmental financial support, little evidence exists as to how much or from whom.<sup>42</sup>

The CPP/NPA main source of income is the "revolutionary taxation" levied on peasants, barrios, and companies. The poor are expected to give two percent of the harvest; middle class peasants five percent; landlords ten percent of their annual income and "agricultural capitalists" anywhere between ten and fifty percent. Agribusinesses and mining corporations are assessed taxes based on a careful review of their books, and these assessments represent the vast majority of CPP/NPA income. There are no reliable figures on CPP/NPA income from "revolutionary taxation", but the AFP estimates that in one region alone possibly as much as \$750,000 was collected in 1985.<sup>43</sup>

Weapons are usually captured from AFP armories, although anecdotes tell of some rebels using their father's or grandfather's weapons from World War Two, and reportedly Libya successfully smuggled 150 AK-47s into Manila in 1981.<sup>44</sup> The CPP/NPA has solicited weapons from the Soviet Union and China, but to date there is no indication that either has responded. Attempts to gain weapons from Libya, which supports the Moslem secessionist movement on Mindanao, were rebuffed.<sup>45</sup> In the

mid-1980s the NPA attempted to purchase weapons in Europe and the Middle East, and was apparently successful in purchasing weapons, ammunition, and communications equipment from either Libya or Syria.<sup>46</sup>

PHASING AND TIMING: As an insurgency patterned on the Maoist model the CPP/NPA attempted to establish safe areas in the outlying districts in the early 1970s. Shortly after declaring martial law Marcos sent large numbers of his army (Armed Forces of the Philippines, AFP) to attack NPA strongholds on Luzon. The fighting nearly decimated the NPA, which had attempted to establish a "little Yenan," or permanently liberated zone on the island.<sup>47</sup> Although thousands were arrested, nearly all of the CPP cadres managed to escape to the jungles, declaring "the present situation is far more favorable to the revolutionary movement than ever before."<sup>48</sup>

Its near destruction caused the NPA to go deep underground, abandoning its overt military strategy. The change allowed them to avoid concentrating into a noticeable mass, causing the government to think they were inactive and relieving counterinsurgency pressure.

Rather than present a military target, the NPA emphasized rural activities and established fronts on the islands of Mindanao, Panay, Samar, and Negros. The fronts would operate largely autonomously, taking general direction from the CPP Central Committee. So long as the NPA did not create too much publicity, e.g., by assassinating too popular a political



figure, the AFP in general took a laissez faire attitude. The relatively quiet second half of the Seventies gave the CPP/NPA time to firmly establish their 'local roots' in rural communities, establish stronger guerilla fronts, and cement local support.<sup>49</sup> The NPA sought to establish legitimacy with the local peasant population by emphasizing "socio-economic and political issues ranging from tenancy problems to tribal neglect,"<sup>50</sup> and engaging in numerous civic action programs: irrigation projects, improved farming techniques, and public health. As a result it was viewed as "more effective than the police in clearing up . . . thieves, usurers, [and] abusive overseers . . ."<sup>51</sup>

By the early 1980s the CPP/NPA decided they were ready to move into the "advanced substage of strategic defensive" by conducting limited offensives and to work to reestablish cells in urban areas composed primarily of disaffected students and labor leaders. The May First Movement (KMU) was formed as an offshoot of the CPP to protest a declining real-wage base, and by 1984 boasted over half a million members. Terrorist activities were increased, resulting in the assassinations of at least fifteen government officials by NPA "sparrow units" from 1981 to 1987. Rough estimates put the number of deaths resulting from the insurgency at 4,000 in 1984 and 5,100 in 1985.<sup>52</sup>

The most significant change was the transition of the NPA cells from primarily political in nature to small guerilla

units. In 1984 the party again moved to a more advanced stage of the insurgency, making plans to move to a "strategic stalemate", where attacks against military targets would be stepped up and be more sophisticated. For example, in September, 1987 the NPA launched an operation which destroyed four bridges, cut rail lines and toppled five power-transmission towers, all in the Bicol region.<sup>53</sup>

Subsequent to 1987 the NPA military power has continued to grow, both in the rural districts and in the cities. However, indications are that the NPA must be content to remain in the 'Strategic stalemate', or protracted war phase in large measure due to a shortage of weapons and ammunition. Raids are typically limited to twenty-man platoons used in ambushes, although on some occasions several platoons have formed a company for larger operations.\*

Ferdinand Marcos' unexpected exit from the Philippines, and the subsequent inauguration of Corizon Aquino nearly caught the CPP/NPA unawares. The wholesale release of political prisoners and rescission of many of Marcos' more onerous decrees were cause for a brief, though measurable, drop in public support for the communists. But Aquino's subsequent negotiation of a cease-fire with the communists gave the CPP something it had longed for since 1969: acknowledgement by the government that the party was a legitimate political force.<sup>54</sup>

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\* Some commentators suggest the NPA may be able to form battalion-sized units within two years: see O'Ballance.

The political peace and national sense of well-being following Marcos exile to America bode well for a permanent solution to the communist insurgency. Unfortunately, the relative calm was short-lived. Despite acceptance of the CPP as a quasi-legitimate party, the armed actions of the NPA continued, and the increasing paralysis of the Aquino government aided the insurgents. For example, this was when the Bicol raid occurred. As a result of a seizure of NPA documents, the AFP Chief of Staff announced what appeared to be the CPP/NPA/NDF plan for the Aquino administration calling for infiltrating the government departments with the assistance of "liberal and progressive forces in the government", followed by a campaign to discredit "non-progressive" government officials. In essence, it is a plan to sabotage the government from within.<sup>55</sup>

ORGANIZATIONAL AND OPERATIONAL PATTERNS:\* The CPP/NPA is a mass oriented insurgency, staking their claim for legitimacy on the economic and political inequities in the Philippines. The Central Committee of 29 members provides strategic and ideological guidance, with the Political Committee responsible for day-to-day operations. Territorial commissions, established in 1980, divide areas of major communist influence into regions to assist in coordination.

Since the abortive attempt to establish "little Yanan's" in the early 1970s, the CPP/NPA has opted for a centralized

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\* The majority of this information comes from Porter, unless otherwise noted.

leadership with highly decentralized operations, primarily to avoid a fixed target for the AFP. The basic field organization is along the lines of what Sison calls "fronts," or groupings of adjacent barrios. Policy is to send the best party members to organize and lead the fronts, giving the leader considerable leeway in how he may conduct his operations. Such an organization has the distinct advantage of flexibility to meet unique local conditions.<sup>56</sup>

The organization below the front\* is one of cells in the rural barrios, where a small team of the party faithful first examine the local conditions to determine exactly what peasant grievances can be exploited, as well as to identify individuals who might be useful to the cause.

After the investigation of local conditions the 'investigators' establish an organizing committee which is representative of the major barrio groups; e.g., women, farmers, youth, etc. The organizing committee is charged with establishing mass meetings to 'discuss' (or perhaps exaggerate) grievances previously identified, and later inaugurating 'mass organizations' of the major barrio groups. Ultimately a 'revolutionary committee' is established which then assumes responsibility for quasi-governmental functions, such as health care or farm production.

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\* This is a brief description of the barrio organization; urban areas follow the same general pattern.

Another revolutionary organization which is particularly potent is the peasant association, made up exclusively of the poor, which attempts to 'influence' landlords to adjust the cost and payment ratios normally levied on the peasants.

#### THE MILITARY INSURGENCY

The Philippines now face a new insurgency never seriously threatened during the Marcos regime: a disaffected and mutinous military, at all levels, that threatens governmental stability more seriously and immediately than the CPP/NPA. The problem bears discussion since there can be little long-term effective action against the communists until the AFP regains credibility with the government and the population.

Since Aquino took power no less than six coups have been attempted: some were little more than publicity stunts, yet she was nearly toppled in December, 1989, surviving in large measure to the display of American airpower over downtown Manila.

At one time the AFP was considered one of the best, most professional forces in Asia. Yet after the imposition of martial law Marcos began promoting his favorites to leadership positions, and turned a blind eye to their corruption and amassed wealth fantastically beyond the scope of their official remuneration. The vast majority of the defense budget was spent in the Manila area, while troops fighting the NPA in rural areas and outlying islands were often forced to feed and clothe themselves from their own impoverished resources.<sup>57</sup>

Although the lack of support by the military was pivotal in Marcos downfall, particularly when Defense Minister Juan Ponce Enrile switched sides, the military's support for Aquino quickly turned to abrasive neutrality. The AFP was "scrupulously" apolitical until Marcos decreed martial law. While many officers saw the decree as a means to enhancing their personal power and wealth, another group, principally younger, saw the growing corruption with mounting disgust. This group felt Aquino owed them more than public acknowledgement of their contributions toward Marcos fall, something Aquino was unwilling to give. Understandably disturbed by her husband's long incarceration in military jails, Aquino tried to distance herself from the military. Yet Marcos fall from power was not the military's, and:

. . . she quickly recognized their strength . .  
[and] . . . retreated from promised social  
reforms, gave them greater latitude to fight the  
communists, and ignored their human rights  
abuses.<sup>58</sup>

Her appalling lack of leadership (after one mutiny the sentence for the conspirators was 30 push-ups!) merely emboldened the military. The American actions during the 1989 coup attempt further undercut Aquino when they were viewed by nationalists as a further sign of dependence on Washington. One of Aquino's post coup actions was to arrest former Defense Minister Enrile, at the time a Senator, on charges of "rebellion and murder" for allegedly abetting the December coup. Intended

as a sign to the military that she should no longer acquiesce to insubordination, the action backfired. Enrile was held for a week in what could modestly be described as business office conditions, then released on \$4500 bail. The Philippine Supreme Court subsequently dismissed the charges.<sup>59</sup>

The most recent military mutiny was the October, 1990 uprising on the island of Mindanao, lead Aquino's former bodyguard Colonel Alexander Noble. Not a classic coup intended to replace the Manila government, Noble declared Mindanao an independent state. Although he surrendered after only a few days, the military remains restive, and perhaps unwilling to wait for 1992 national elections to see the Manila government change.

## **POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION**

The essential goal of an insurgent is to establish his legitimacy to the exclusion of the government. The fundamental action the Philippine government must take to fortify its legitimacy and quell the CPP/NPA insurgency is to remove the economic and social inequities so prevalent throughout the country. The route to successful counterinsurgency, therefore, is political and not military. Any commitment of U.S. ground forces before or after a bona fide change in Philippine society would be a disastrous undertaking.

The United States cannot and should not have the leading role in any counterinsurgency work. The sense of nationalism spurred by the CPP casts the U.S. in a poor light, and any perception that the U.S. is manipulating the Philippine government via counterinsurgency operations for its own ends will do little but provide succor for the CPP.

A useful framework for successful counterinsurgency is the Internal Defense and Development (IDAD) strategy. IDAD is a national effort which seeks to balance political, economic, and social development; provide safety and security for the population, thus denying the insurgents popular support; neutralization, which seeks to keep the insurgents physically and psychologically separated from the population; and mobilizing the population in genuine support for the government. Regardless of the counterinsurgent methodology used, the primary



force must be the Philippine government and not the United States. Strategies using IDAD are discussed below.<sup>60</sup>

SECURITY: The Philippine military counterinsurgency effort is a major irritant to the Philippine people, and reform of it is an absolute imperative. Without a force capable and willing to secure the barrios the population has little incentive or opportunity to escape NPA/NDF control. U.S. security advisors can make considerable headway in 're-professionalizing' the AFP, putting its leadership beyond politics and corruption. In the words of Richard Armitage, former Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs, "the people at the top have to be the ones that those down below can emulate. They can't be affected by habits of corruption." One method to remove corrupt temptations is to provide direct grants of equipment through the Military Aid Program, as opposed to grants and credits for commercial arms sales through the Foreign Military Sales Program.<sup>61</sup>

Rampant corruption at the upper levels has led to a disaffected and in some cases mutinous force which is despised by most of the poor. Atrocities allegedly committed by the AFP are legend. Assistance in instilling a sense of pride and professionalism in the AFP is paramount, but can only occur if the Aquino government genuinely wants it to happen. Military discipline is critical to avoid atrocities, and the discipline must be rigidly enforced. Better pay is also important if young

recruits and conscripts are to avoid the incentive of stealing from the local populace.<sup>62</sup>

U.S. trainers and advisors working with loyal and uncorrupted local military officers can assist in instilling a new sense of pride in the AFP. Advisors in small unit tactics and civil affairs serving as trainers can assist the AFP in overcoming its reputation as a blunt instrument. Joint-combined exercises with the AFP to test and evaluate their strong and weak points, and

...support political and psychological goals by demonstrating the values of officer and noncommissioned officer professional education and training, alternatives to traditional relationships between classes or groups within the society, and the subordination of the military to civil authority.<sup>63</sup>

With proper training and motivation the AFP can provide many of the traditional government services now usurped by the NDF in the barrios.

Much evidence points toward atrocities in northern Mindanao and Samar caused by local quasi-militias and vigilante groups, and an AFP response is limited because of poor communications and equipment. Supplying basic military necessities such as uniforms, boots, radios, and rations would allow more consistent operations by national forces to the exclusion of the anarchic actions by the quasi-militias.<sup>64</sup> More importantly, since the Philippines is an archipelago with poor internal transportation, the U.S. should emphasize relatively low-technology transportation aid. All terrain vehicles with good range, and

simple helicopters can provide mobility a revitalized AFP will need to counter guerilla operations. Most equipment aid should avoid high-technology items, such as jet fighter aircraft, which are impressive in reviews but which add little to internal security programs.<sup>65</sup>

In addition to renewing AFP professionalism, American support for recruiting, training and organizing local constabularies can aid considerably in providing security to the barrios. Local people who are well respected by the population, and who have a degree of permanence in the community have a sense of identity with the barrio and have a stronger incentive to insure its security than transient military units. Moreover, local police can release AFP forces to conduct mobile operations against guerilla units. Local police also have the opportunity to gather considerable intelligence about NPA activities, and to keep a pulse on the mood of the people.

NEUTRALIZATION: Closely coupled with revitalizing rural and urban security is neutralizing NPA contact with the population. A potential source of support here is the Catholic Church. Although I've shown there is growing support among the clergy for the CPP and the NDF, the majority of the Church hierarchy is neutral or supports the government. An honest effort by the Philippine government to work with local parishes to keep abreast of the needs of the people, coupled with government programs to meet those needs, can deny the CPP/NDF of the local dissatisfaction it needs to grow.

Civil-military operations (CMO) can provide essential services, in some instances now provided by the NDF, such as medical treatment and facilities, communications, and transportation which tend to improve the relationship between the local population and the government. Used properly CMO can encourage active support for military operations.

Energetic prosecution of captured insurgents is also important, but such prosecution must be placed within the framework of an uncorrupted civilian judiciary. Fair trials and harsh sentences for those convicted demonstrates that the government is willing to work within a fair and legal framework, and generates legitimacy.

By the same token, even more exacting standards must be applied to all members of the AFP and police forces. Allegations of misconduct or illegal activities, either by military or civilian government officials must be vigorously investigated and, if warranted, prosecuted. Moreover, the government must insure that corrupt arrangements with agricultural and industrial figures are likewise ended.

To counter local hostility toward American bases, an invigorated 'good neighbor' policy of Humanitarian and Civic Assistance (HCA), administered by the Americans at the base level, should be instituted. Current good neighbor programs are volunteer activities with nil U.S. financial support. Programs such as visiting medical teams, school and clinic construction projects, etc which are readily identifiable with the bases can

remove considerable local resentment. When operated in consultation with local leaders, who are not necessarily local government officials, such programs can quickly erode the foundation of local support for the CPP. The critical characteristic of such programs is genuine cooperation with local leaders, with the U.S. providing funding and manpower support. Scrupulous attention to fairness and avoiding even the most remote suspicion of corruption or manipulation are also vitally important.

MOBILIZATION: The U.S. can provide substantial aid and assistance in mobilizing the popular support for the government through well thought out HCA programs. For example, eighty-one percent of all roads in the Philippines are unpaved.<sup>66</sup> Road construction and paving programs by U.S. military or the Philippine government aid the AFP's military operations against the insurgents and generally improve communications in the rural districts. Similarly, rural (and to a lesser extent urban) electrification and water projects improve the standards of living in the barrios and demonstrates a commitment to the population by the government, again removing a major recruiting tool for the insurgency. Basic medical and dental care are important, but so also veterinary care. In rural areas where animals are the life-blood of the family, veterinary programs may prove most effective.

BALANCED DEVELOPMENT: Balanced development is the fundamental solution to problems which sustain successful insurgencies. Not

just economic, it must also include political and social development as well. Since we earlier demonstrated the need for continued U.S. military presence in the Philippines, the corollary is that the country must be stable. Continued political instability in the Philippines could make a renewed bases agreement in 1992 a pyrrhic victory for the U.S.

To help establish and insure political stability the United States must, as a matter of national policy, apply leverage at every opportunity to pressure for real and lasting social, economic, political, military, and agrarian reform. Honest support of fair and constitutional electoral process, as opposed supporting a specific candidate or party, will tend to give the U.S. involvement a degree of legitimacy we lost through our support of Marcos. While we of course will prefer one party or candidate over another, the emphasis of our support must be the process and not necessarily the outcome.

Land reform is perhaps the single most important issue that aids the CPP insurgency. Mediocre attempts at land reform during both the Marcos and Aquino eras were both inadequate and frustrating for the peasants. Allegations have been made that Aquino hesitated on land reform to avoid antagonizing owners of large "plantations" who traditionally hold immense political power in Manila. Aquino offered a program in 1987 which would, by conservative estimates, have cost the central government at least \$5 billion, which the World Bank claimed would "severely strain the government's...capacity."<sup>67</sup> When this plan was

roundly criticized Aquino attempted reform by decree with the Congress determining the timing and the minimum size of the holdings which would be redistributed. The Congress failed to act and the plan collapsed. Presently there is no practical alternative on the horizon. Quiet U.S. assistance and occasional diplomatic prodding can be effective in establishing effective land reform. A useful strategy might be to couple land reform with U.S. industrial aid, through both loans and grants. Relaxation of U.S. tariff and non-tariff barriers to trade are a vehicle by which the Philippines can develop potential industries and join the burgeoning economies of its neighbors, at the same time reducing the economic effects of land reform.<sup>68</sup>

Socially, the U.S. government must continue to apply pressure to the Aquino government to make every effort to remove the feudal vestiges of Philippine society. The power of the matriarchal families at the pinnacle of Philippine society must accept the fact that, if the country is to survive and grow in the twenty-first century, rigid class strictures must be abandoned. Upward mobility socially, in education, in agriculture and in industry must be an accepted fact of Philippine society: the rule rather than the infrequent exception.

In summary, we have shown that an American military presence in the western Pacific is in our national interest. Such a presence acts as a deterrent against events across the spectrum

of concern; from a revitalized Soviet naval force in Vietnam, to armed disputes over sovereignty claims with China, to infiltration of rebels and weapons into the various ASEAN nations. Although alternatives exist to the American bases in the Philippines, as seen from the perspective of American and ASEAN security no other alternative offers bases close enough to the western Pacific with facilities able to support major naval, air, and amphibious forces.

There is considerable sentiment in the Philippines against continued U.S. presence in the country, and most of this dissatisfaction is inflamed by the CPP. Between "rent" payments to the Philippine government, and the value of base spending on the local economy, the economic impact of the American bases accounts for almost five percent of the Philippine gross national product. In the long run, that five percent may well overcome doubts regarding continued base agreements which the Philippine government might harbor.

However, anti-American sentiment will continue to grow while the CPP/NPA/NDF insurgency is active. Support for the insurgents stems from the inherent political, economic, and social inequities in Philippine society. The Philippine counterinsurgency effort has been largely ineffective in quelling the CPP because of the stratification of Philippine society and the corruption in the AFP, both of which were fostered and perpetuated by Marcos. Aquino has been unable to move effectively to reorder Philippine society, undertake

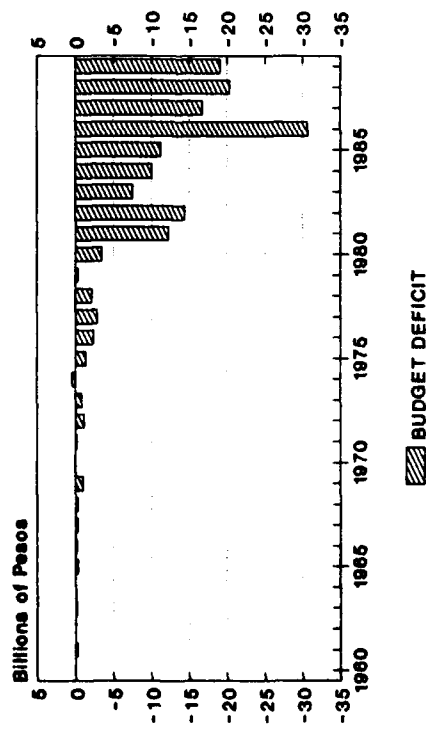


effective land reform, or institute a long-term industrialization policy.

The United States can help insure long-term basing rights by thoughtful, low-key counterinsurgency aid using the IDAD concept. By aiming our efforts at helping the Philippine government provide basic services, build its infrastructure, and re-professionalize its armed forces, we can help remove many of the causes for CPP legitimacy and support.

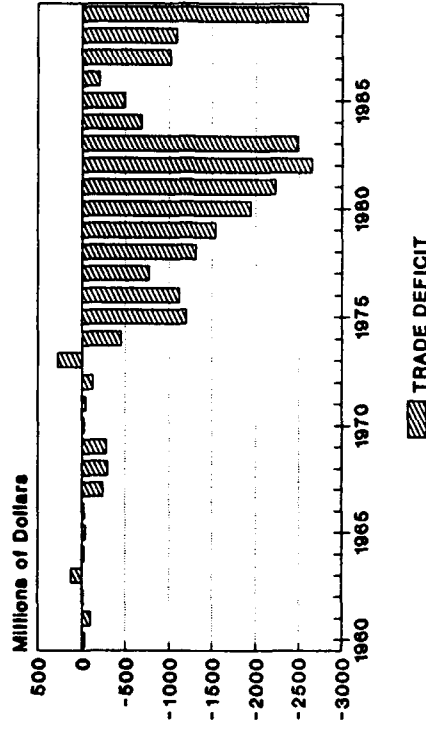
**APPENDIX**

# BUDGET DEFICIT FIGURE 2



SOURCE: IFS 1990 Yearbook

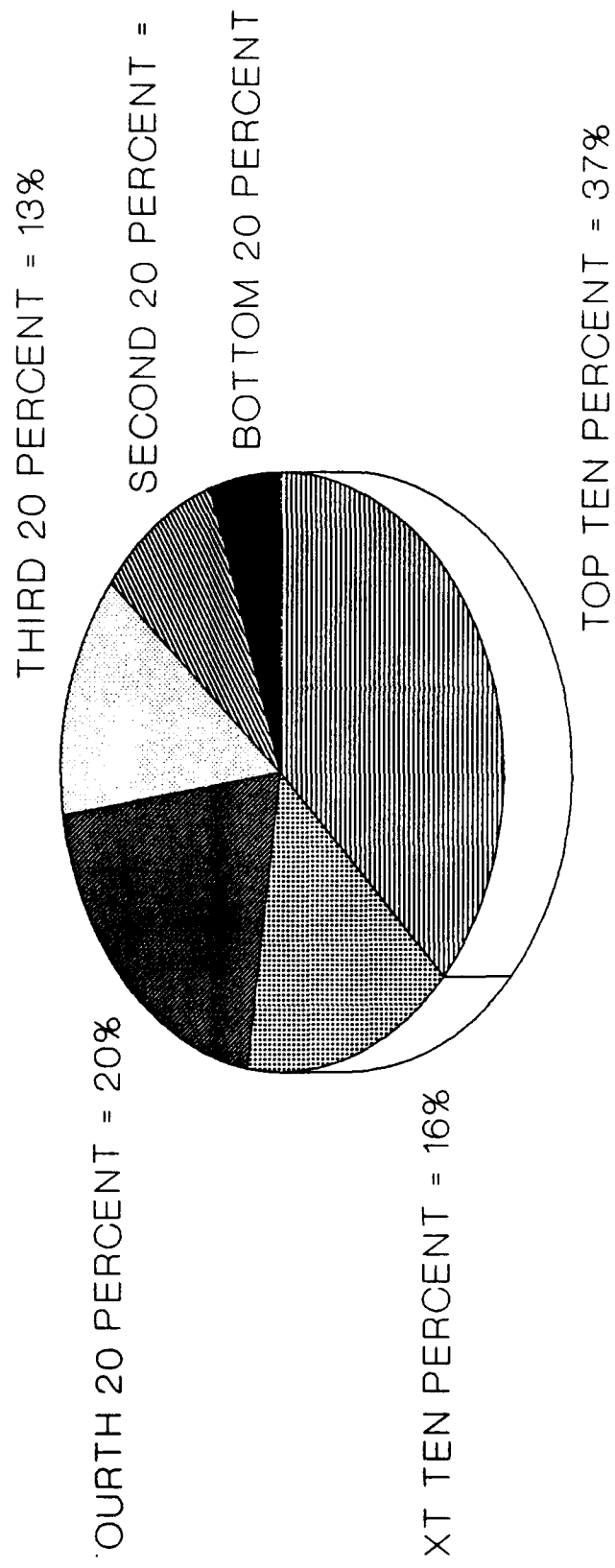
# TRADE DEFICIT FIGURE 3



SOURCE: IFS 1990 Yearbook

# INCOME DISTRIBUTION

## FIGURE 4



SOURCE: The Philippine Revolution...

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